

DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Friday, August 11, 2000

From My Perspective

By Ken Patterson

R.I.P. Fiscal Year 2000

The near final budget numbers are in for DCFS for state fiscal year 2000 and they are much better than we feared they would be back in November of 1999. Right now it looks like we will finish the year with a \$1.3 million deficit. That figure includes paying the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) \$700,000 for certain youth services they provide. Earlier in the year we were telling DYC that we couldn't pay the bill, but ended up being able to pay our share and then some.

Technically, of course, we don't end the year in the red. At the very end of fiscal year close out, our needs and the needs of other divisions are all considered when allocating federal funds so that all of DHS can balance. So officially we are balanced.

As you will remember, at one point we were projected to be over by \$10 million, so today's news means that we were off by 1%.

I know that managing your caseloads, expenses, travel, etc. has been a hardship since December. I appreciate your work and attention to details that got us through this tough time. From the outcomes I have reviewed, it seems that you all worked in a way that mitigated the impact of the budget problems on your clients and their families. Of course, sometimes outcomes from a budget event like we had are not immediately visible. We will see what the future measures tell us. Thanks again for your efforts, patience, and perseverance.

The New DCFS Political Correctness?

I am hearing it. Are you hearing it? If you do something very well, in a courteous, respectful, and inclusive manner, someone says to you, "thank you for using the Practice Model," or "I liked how you created a working agreement in what we just discussed." On the other hand, I am also hearing, "you're not following the Practice Model," or "that's not consistent with the Practice Model principles." I have been the recipient of both types of comments in the last week.

My first reaction was, damn! I've got to get to some of that Practice Model training so I will know what they are talking about. My second reaction was to go find Richard Anderson and have him interpret what just happened for me (it's nice to have the Practice Model guru in the office next to you). But here is my lasting impression.

When people begin to pair interactions within our organization to what they are learning it is a clear sign that things are moving and changing. In my first two years and 10 months on the job, nobody ever once commented directly on my "practice" and then boom—constant comments (decidedly mixed) in a two week period.

It tells me that we are beginning to be introspective about our own behavior and interactions with others. We are reflecting on its impact. We are evaluating our style and its effectiveness. And we are giving feedback to others.

It will be interesting to watch...is commenting on our “practice” just a way of being politically correct within DCFS, a way of saying to others, “I did pay attention in the training”...or will reflecting on our own interactions with others, thinking before we speak and listening more attentively, actually begin to change how we treat each other and our families?

To Make Your Life Easier: Using SAFE Optimally

By Bob Lewis

When a CPS worker removes a child, transitioning the case to foster care in SAFE is so much easier if these steps are followed:

- Enter information about the removal and initial placement into the CPS case.
- Create the SCF case **before** the CPS case is closed, using the CPS case as the prior case.